Essential Skills Enrolments and Outcomes in Northern Ireland from 2002/03 up to 2015/16

This publication provides detail into the characteristics of those enrolling and qualifying, as well as performance statistics for the Essential Skills programme since the start of the strategy in 2002/03.

Key Points

- From 2002/03 to 2010/11, enrolments in Essential Skills increased year on year. However, since 2011/12, enrolments have started to decrease. Over the past academic year enrolments have decreased by 2.7% from 39,218 in 2014/15 to 38,147 in 2015/16 but still remain higher than totals in 2008/09 and earlier academic years (Table 1).

- Over the course of the strategy, 40.2% of Essential Skills enrolments have been in Literacy, 39.6% in Numeracy and 20.2% in ICT (Table 8).

- Since the beginning of the strategy, those aged '16-24' have formed the highest proportion of Essential Skills enrolments, ranging from 46.8% to 83.3% across individual academic years (Table 2).

- Over the course of the strategy, the proportion of enrolments with an 'economically inactive' status has generally been increasing year on year from 12.8% in 2002/03 to 42.3% in 2014/15, although this has fallen to 35.5% in 2015/16 (Table 3).

- Since the start of the strategy, the proportion of Essential Skills enrolments at 'Level 2' has generally been increasing from 7.0% in 2002/03 to 42.5% in 2015/16. (Table 6).

- Almost two thirds (65.4%) of Essential Skills enrolments gain a qualification. For Numeracy enrolments, the equivalent success rate is 68.2%, while it is 67.5% for Literacy and 56.0% for ICT enrolments (Table 17).

Reader Information

Purpose	Monitor and report on Essential Skills enrolment and qualification activity in Northern Ireland.
Authors	Jamie Mill, Allan Nesbitt, Brian French.
Publication Date	Thursday 8th December 2016
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Target audience	DfE, Directors of FE Colleges in Northern Ireland, Board members of FE Colleges, educational professionals, academics, media and members of the public interested in the FE sector.
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Price	Free
Copyright	This publication is Crown copyright and may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium. Any material used must be acknowledged, and the title of the publication specified.

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About the Statistics and Research Branch (Tertiary Education)

Statistics and Research Branch (Tertiary Education) is responsible for the collection, quality assurance, analysis and publication of timely and accurate information derived from a wide range of statistical information returns supplied by the Further Education colleges across Northern Ireland and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

The Head of the Branch is the Principal Statistician, Brian French. The Branch aims to present information in a meaningful way and provide advice on its uses to the Minister for the Economy, customers in the DfE Committee, Further Education Colleges, Universities, Professional Advisory Groups, policy branches within the DfE, other educational organisations, academia, private sector organisations, charity/voluntary organisations, as well as the general public. The statistical information collected is used to contribute to major exercises such as reporting on the performance of the Further Education and Higher Education sectors, other comparative performance exercises, target setting and monitoring, departmental research projects, development of service frameworks as well as policy formulation and evaluation. In addition, the information is used in response to a high volume of Assembly questions and ad-hoc queries each year.

Information is disseminated through several key statistical publications, including:

- Essential Skills Enrolments and Outcomes;
- Further Education Activity;
- Higher Education Enrolments;
- Higher Education Qualifications;
- Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education.

A detailed list of these publications is available from:

Website: https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/statistics-publication-schedule

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Explanatory Notes

This statistical release is the seventh in an annual series presenting information on Essential Skills Enrolments and Outcomes in Northern Ireland.

The 'Technical Notes' at the end of the report provide detailed information on the methodology used to produce the statistics and the definitions of the terms used within the report.

Where tables and figures are mentioned within the commentary, these are hyperlinked to their location within the document.

Data Collection

The information presented in this bulletin derives from a series of statistical returns (listed below) provided by Further Education (FE) Colleges.

- Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for the years 2002/03 – 2012/13
- Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for the years 2013/14 – 2015/16
- Essential Skills enrolment extract from the Client Management System (CMS) for the years 2002/03 – 2015/16
- Essential Skills Qualifications Return for the years 2002/03 – 2015/16

Enrolments within FE colleges, in regard to academic years 2002/03 to 2012/13, have been derived from the ESER. The CDR only came into operation for the 2013/14 academic year and is used for enrolments from FE colleges related to 2013/14 to 2015/16. The qualifications statistics have all been derived from the Essential Skills Qualifications Return collected from Awarding Organisations.

Essential Skills enrolments that are part of an individual's programme of study through one of the Department's training or employment programmes, such as Training for Success or Steps to Work, are recorded on the Client Management System (CMS), which is installed in Job Centres/Jobs and Benefits offices throughout Northern Ireland. This IT system is used to facilitate the interface with the Department's customers. The relevant data are extracted from CMS at a scheduled date during the year. This data extract contains all Essential Skills enrolments funded through any of DfE's training or employment programmes. In this analysis, it covers the period from 2002/03 to 2015/16.

Both Essential Skills enrolment returns list the enrolment records assigned to a particular provider and returned to the Department. Both returns are merged and any duplicate enrolments are dealt with through a process, presented in the guidance 'Defining an Essential Skills enrolment'. The resultant file is then analysed to present the total number of Essential Skills enrolments

The data returns are computerised data files consisting of individual records for each enrolment and qualification recorded in a time frame specified by the extract.

In recent years, extensive work has been carried out to develop a CDR, which brings together the five main individual Departmental returns from FE colleges (namely, Funded Learning Unit, Further Education Statistical Return, ESER, Entitlement Framework and Further Education Leavers Survey) into a single dataset.

There are significant benefits to be realised in collating all the data requirements of the Department into one single return. Streamlining the production process of data increases the efficiency of the process in generating the data. With extra information now available for each enrolment record, it also increases the potential in terms of analytical ability, while increasing the consistency of analysis across all FE college data by reducing the potential of using several datasets. Data quality is also enhanced with data being generated at the same point in time and a significant number of validations employed on the data through the CDR process.

This report includes data relating to the academic years 2002/03 to 2015/16. Previous statistical reports can be found at:

https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/essential-skills-enrolments

Supplementary Tables

Detailed Supplementary Tables are available on the DfE web page:

https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/essential-skills-enrolments-publications-2016

Rounding

Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place; as a consequence some percentages may not sum to 100. Determining the percentage point(s) difference may not equate to the difference between two percentages due to rounding.

Data Quality

All information presented in this bulletin has been validated and quality assured by FE Colleges prior to publication. FE Colleges are given a set period of time to submit the information to Statistics and Research Branch (Tertiary Education). Following submission, this branch performs a series of validation checks to ensure that information is consistent both within and across returns, as well as analyses to monitor annual variations and emerging trends. Validations are also run for training program enrolment data, although the bulletin is published prior to receiving the amended data due to the time taken for the amendments to be administered within the training program dataset; as such, any amendments are reflected in future publications.

The Essential Skills qualification data from the awarding organisations are validated at each quarterly return. Any errors are fed back to the appropriate awarding organisation for amendment. All data sent to DfE from the Open

College Network NI are crosschecked against their learner registration and awards system (QUARTZ) to ensure the accuracy of their submissions. The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) cross checks all certified candidates in the period matches what is generated in the DfE report. City and Guilds conducts quality assurance checks on the data and processes. City and Guilds have both internal and external audits carries out, whereas the Open College Network NI and CCEA have internal audits.

Main Uses of Data

The main uses of these data are: to monitor Essential Skills activity; to help assess Essentials Skills performance; corporate monitoring; to inform and monitor related Essential Skills policy; and to respond to NI Assembly questions and ad-hoc queries from the public.

Who will be interested?

The information presented in this statistical bulletin will be of interest to a wide variety of people. For example, the statistics are used by DfE policy officials in their role of assisting and advising the Minister for DfE to discharge his duties; by the NI Assembly and DfE committee to scrutinise the Essential Skills sector; by other government departments, such as the Department of Education; by local businesses to quantify the supply of those qualifying in their business area; by prospective students to inform their choices around Essential Skills courses; and by researchers and academics to try and understand the underlying trends in Essential Skills.

An Official Statistics Publication

The statistics within this bulletin have been compiled in accordance with Official Statistics guidelines. They aim to meet identified user needs; are accessible and explained; are produced in accordance with sound methods; and are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Further information on the Code of Practice for National Statistics is available at:

http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/.

Further information on the DfE Statement of Compliance in relation to the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order (Northern Ireland) 2009 is available at:

https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/statement-compliance

Essential Skills Activity Information Elsewhere in the United Kingdom

Due to differing counting rules, Essential Skills activity information in other UK administrations is not always measured in a comparable manner to those in Northern Ireland. Details of the Essential Skills activity information published elsewhere in the UK can be found as detailed below.

England

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-skills-for-life

Wales

http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/schools-wales-examination-performance

http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/learner-outcome-measures-further-education-work-based-learning-community-learning

Comparing levels of qualifications

Within Essential Skills for 'Literacy' and 'Numeracy', individuals can obtain qualifications at 5 levels:

- Entry level 1
- Entry level 2
- Entry level 3
- Level 1
- Level 2

Essential Skills Information Communication and Technology (ICT) courses are only available at 'Level 1' and 'Level 2'. Further information on the various levels is available within the definitions section of this document. Qualifications at the same level are of a similar level of demand or difficulty.

For further information on comparing qualifications across the UK, Ireland and overseas please refer to the link:

http://ofqual.gov.uk/help-and-advice/comparing-qualifications

Feedback

As we want to engage with users of our statistics, we invite you to feedback your comments on this publication to:

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Introduction

The then Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) launched the Essential Skills for Living Strategy and action plan in April 2002. The Essential Skills for Living Strategy aims to improve adult literacy, numeracy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)) in Northern Ireland. Essential Skills courses, which are funded by DfE, are free to participants and delivered by accredited tutors working in Further Education (FE) Colleges, private training providers and community organisations.

This statistical bulletin has been produced by DfE's Statistics and Research Branch (Tertiary Education). The bulletin focuses on students enrolled in Essential Skills courses across Northern Ireland since the start of the strategy in 2002. It details the number of enrolments, their characteristics and numbers qualifying in Essential Skills courses.

Structure

The bulletin is divided into three sections:

- Section A focuses on Essential Skills enrolments and has seven subsections:

    - How many are participating?
    - What are the characteristics of those participating?
        - Age
        - Employment status
        - Gender
    - Target Level Deprivation Analysis
    - What courses are being studied?
    - Subject and age
    - Subject and gender
    - Where are the courses being studied?

- Section B concentrates on Essential Skills qualifications and has three subsections:

    - Number of qualifications
    - Achievements by subject and
    - Achievements by level

- The final section C details the performance rates (retention, achievement and success) for Essential Skills provision:

    - Performance by subject
    - Performance by gender
    - Performance by age band
    - Performance by target level

Please note that all Essential Skills enrolments are regarded as 'Regulated' provision and offered on a part time basis. As such, no mode of attendance analysis is presented in this publication.

Policy and Operational Context

The Minister for the Economy has responsibility within the NI Executive for FE colleges. He is also accountable to the NI Assembly, which undertakes a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to DfE and plays a key role in the consideration and development of legislation.

It is within this context that the Essential Skills for Living Strategy has been designed to improve levels of Numeracy and Literacy (and ICT in 2009/10) among the adult population in Northern Ireland. The vision for the delivery of the Essential Skills Strategy is:

"to provide opportunities for adults to update their Essential Skills to assist them in improving their overall quality of life, their personal development and their employment opportunities and by so doing to promote greater economic development, social inclusion and cohesion".

The strategy provides a high quality education for all, with equal access for all and this has had a positive effect on all groups specified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Strategy contributes to the Executive's Programme for Government targets and the work it is taking forward on equality, by providing the opportunity for socially disadvantaged people and groups to improve their qualifications and Essential Skills, and help them to increase their employability. It is also being used to contribute to the DfE new Programme for Government Targets.

Section A: Enrolments

How many are participating?

Since the commencement of the Essential Skills strategy in October 2002, there have been just over 468,000 enrolments in total (just under 192,000 individuals). Between 2002/03 and 2010/11, the number of enrolments increased year on year reaching a peak of 60,063. Since then, the number of enrolments has decreased in each of the next five academic years to a total of 38,147 in 2015/16. The numbers of individuals enrolling have followed the same pattern, peaking at 22,914 in 2010/11 and decreasing, in each subsequent year, to 13,922 in 2015/16.

Essential Skills enrolments have decreased by 2.7% over the last academic year, from 39,218 in 2014/15 to 38,147 in 2015/16. The number of individuals has also decreased (2.5%), from 14,272 in 2014/15 to 13,922 in 2015/16 (Figure 1 and Table 1).

Possible explanations for the decline in the number of Essential Skills enrolments can be found in NI School Leaver data, which indicate that the number of school leavers not achieving grades A*-C in GCSE English and Maths has generally been decreasing over the past eight years.

Figure 1: Essential Skills enrolments and individuals by academic year
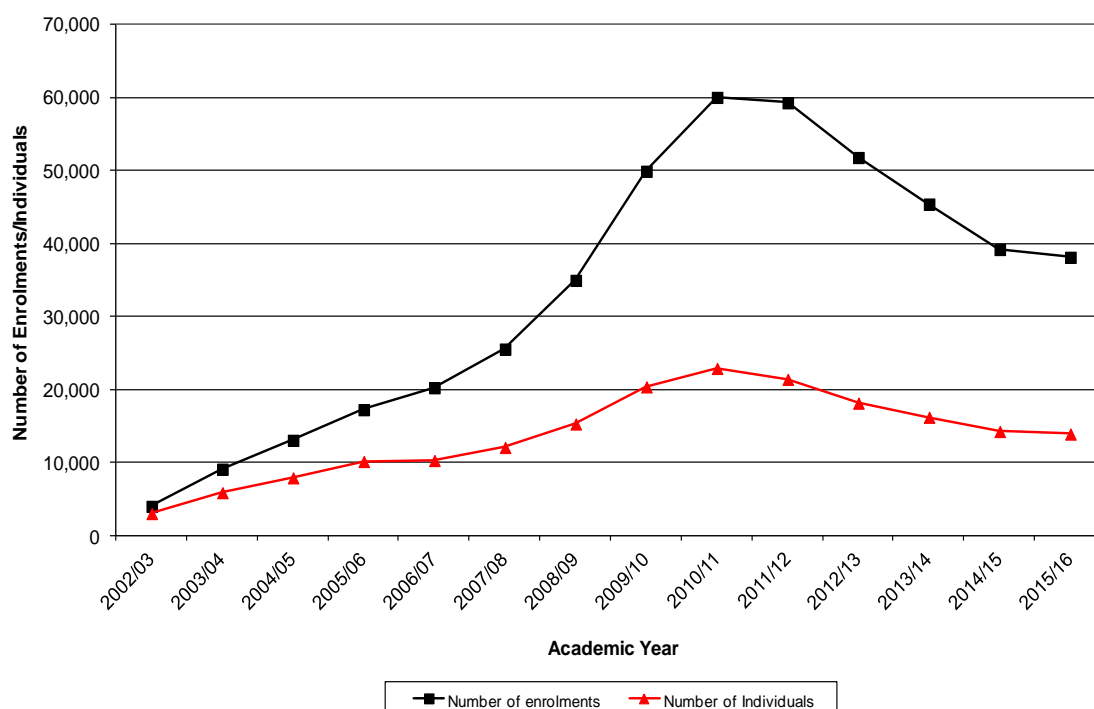
What are the characteristics of those participating?

Age

Over the 14 year period, almost three quarters (71.2%) of the participants in Essential Skills courses have been aged '16-24' years. This cohort of participants had its highest proportion in 2007/08 (83.3%) and lowest proportion, for a full academic year, in 2004/05 (46.8%) (Figure 2 and Table 2).

Figure 2: Essential Skills enrolments by age band since 2002/03
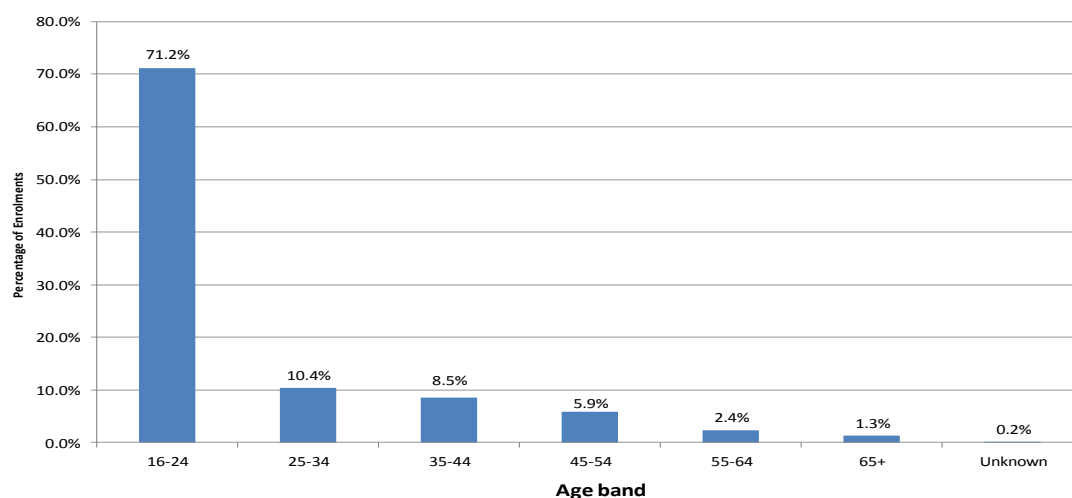
In 2015/16 the majority of enrolments (29,855, 78.3%) were in the '16-24' age band. Those aged '25-34' were the second largest age group of enrolments to Essential Skills courses, accounting for 7.9% (2,999) in 2015/16 (Table 2).

Employment Status

Over half (56.1%) of enrolments in Essential Skills courses across Northern Ireland have the employment status of the individual reported as either 'unemployed' (23.5%) or 'economically inactive' (32.6%). Since the strategy began, there has been a gradual increase in the proportion of those who are 'economically inactive' enrolling on Essential Skills courses. The proportion has risen from 12.8% in the first year of the strategy to a peak of 42.3% in 2014/15 (with a drop to 35.5% in 2015/16). This demonstrates that individuals from outside the labour market and those without a job are attempting to improve their educational profile in terms of essential skills.

In 2015/16, 13,527 (35.5%) enrolments had an employment status of 'economically inactive', 11,220 (29.4%) 'unemployed' and 10,380 (27.2%) 'employed'. For 3,020 (7.9%) enrolments, the employment status was 'unknown' (Figure 3 and Table 3).

Figure 3: Essential Skills enrolments by employment status

2002/03 to 2015/16

2015/16
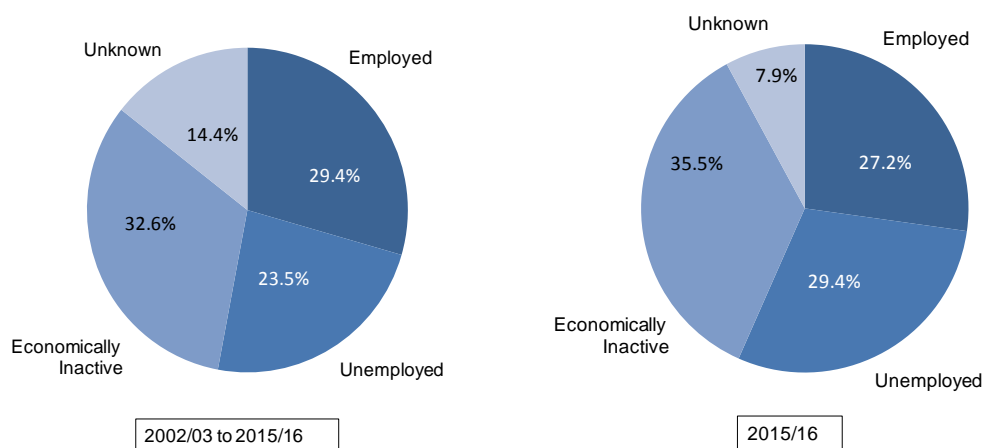
Gender

The general trend in the earlier part of the strategy was that the majority of enrolments in Essential Skills courses were female. Since 2006/07, however, male enrolments have formed the majority. Over the 14 year period, 53.2% of the students on Essential Skills courses have been male (Table 4).

In the last academic year, males accounted for over half (54.8%, 20,893) of enrolments (Figure 4 and Table 4).

Figure 4: Essential Skills enrolments by gender and academic year
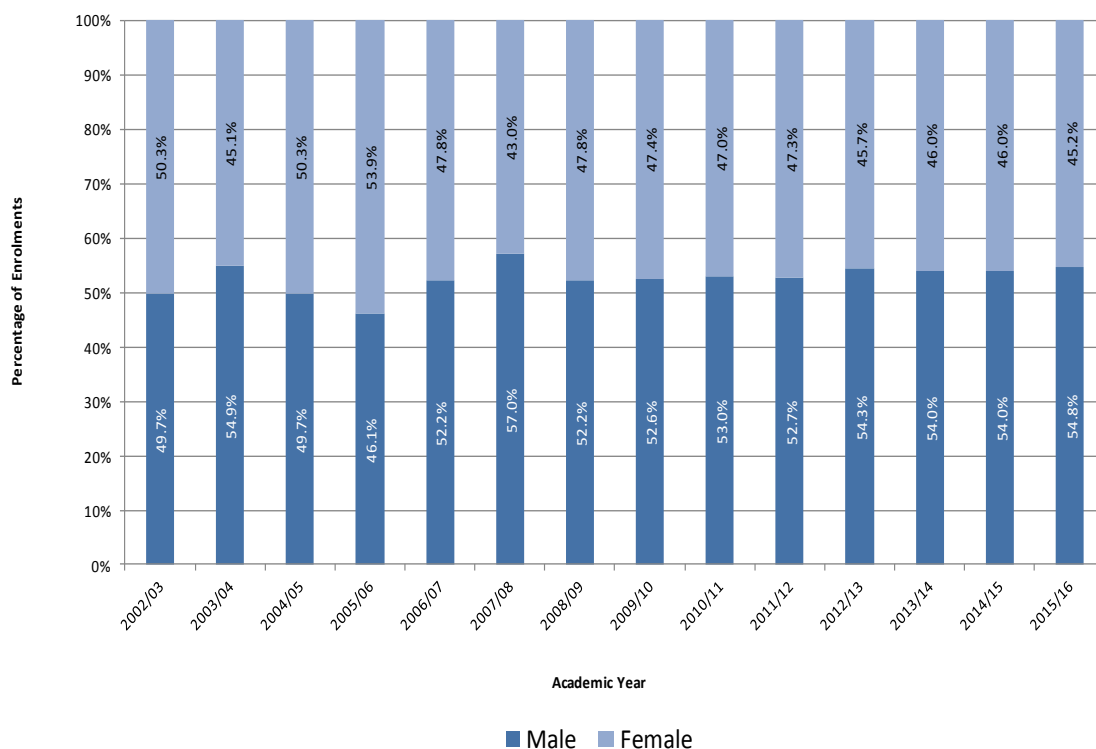
Target Level of study

From the start of the strategy, the highest proportion (45.3%) of Essential Skills enrolments have been at 'Level 1'. However, over this period, the proportion of enrolments at 'Level 2' has been steadily increasing from 7.0% to 42.9% in 2014/15, with 2015/16 seeing a slight drop to 42.5%. This higher proportion at Level 2 means that an increasing share of enrolments are equivalent to GCSE grade A*-C. This has been coupled with a decrease, since 2009/10, in the proportions of 'Level 1' enrolments till 2013/14. Between 2013/14 and 2015/16 the proportion of Level 1 enrolments remained fairly constant.

In 2015/16, Entry level 1, 2 and 3 accounted for 0.8%, 2.4% and 8.4% of enrolments respectively (Figure 5 and Table 6).

Figure 5: Essential Skills Enrolments by subject, target level of study and academic year
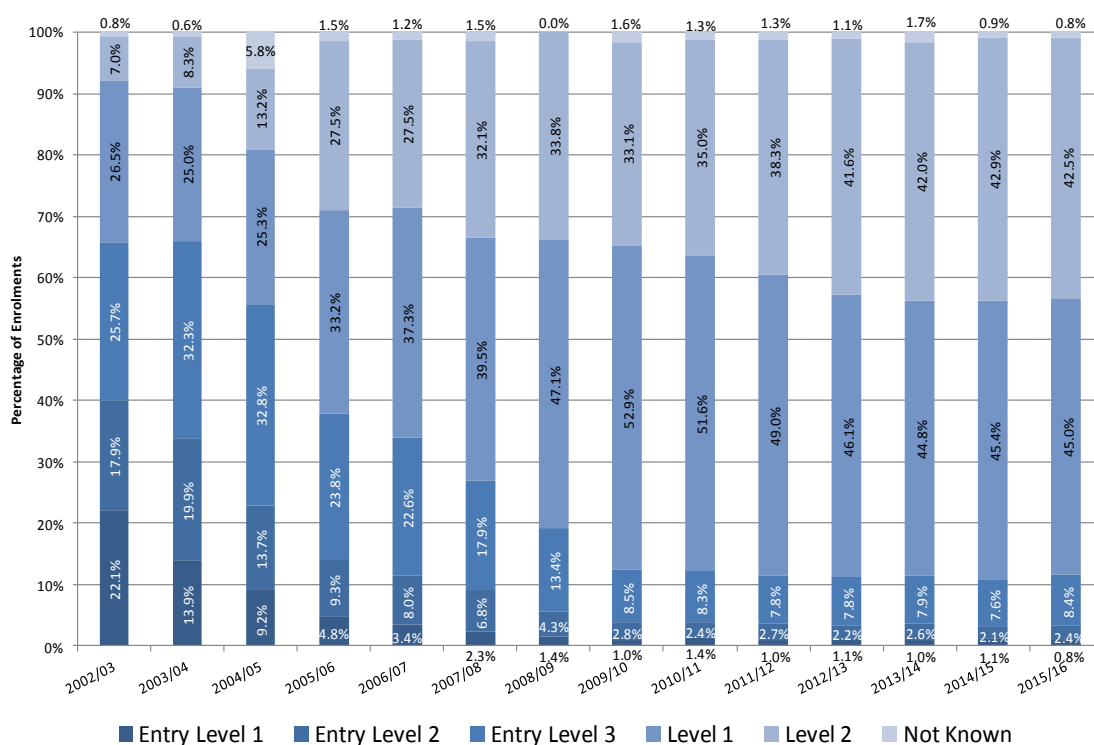
Deprivation[1] Analysis

Deprivation is measured by the official Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM), which categorises geographical areas across Northern Ireland into five groups, termed 'quintiles', each accounting for 20% of the 890 Super Output Areas (SOAs). Quintile 1 is the most deprived group of areas and quintile 5 is the least deprived or most affluent group of areas.

Of the 468,232 Essential Skills enrolments since the beginning of the strategy, the largest share (29.2%) have been from the most deprived quintile. This aligns with census data, which indicate that the highest proportion (24.8%) of those aged 16+ that have no qualification, or their highest level of qualification is at level one and live in the most deprived group of areas across Northern Ireland (Figure 6).

Over the duration of the strategy, the proportion of enrolments in each quintile has remained fairly steady. The only noticeable change is in the most deprived quintile, where there has been a decline in the proportion of enrolments, from 34.1% (2006/07) to 27.2% (2015/16).

Figure 6: Essential Skills enrolments by deprivation quintiles since 2002/03
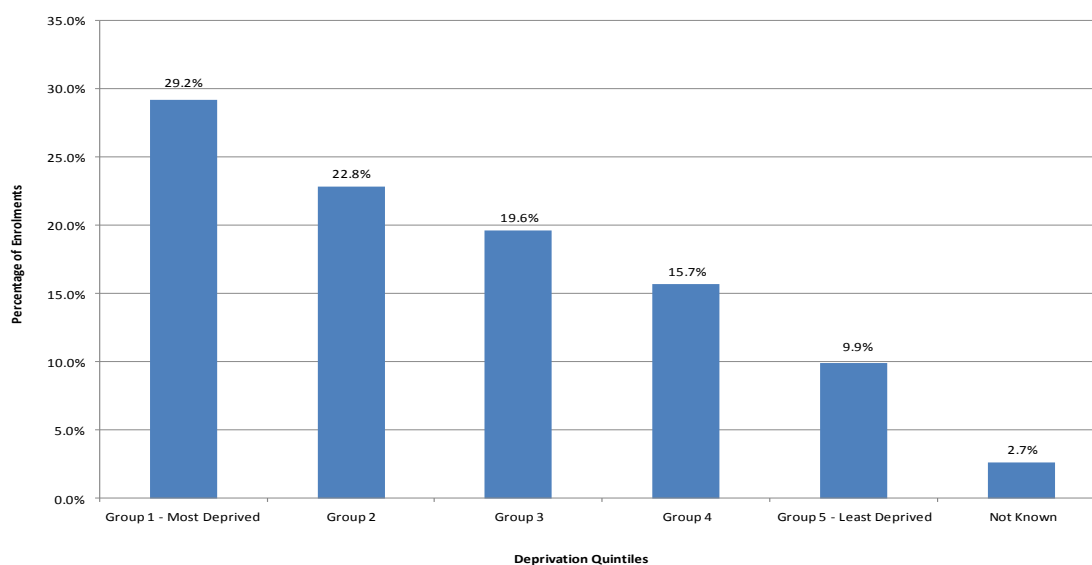
The general trend is, the more deprived the area, the higher the number of enrolments. In the most recent academic year, 10,361 (27.2%) enrolments were from the most deprived quintile, 8,866 (23.2%) from the second most deprived quintile, 7,706 (20.2%) from the middle quintile, 6,313 (16.5%) from the second least deprived quintile and 3,880 (10.2%) from the least deprived quintile (Table 7).

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[1] Information about the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure can be found at
http://www.nisra.gov.uk/deprivation/nimdm_2010.htm

What subjects are being studied?

The most recent academic year indicates that, as a proportion of Essential Skills enrolments, Numeracy accounts for 37.5%, Literacy for 33.9% and ICT for 28.6% of Essential Skills enrolments (Figure 7 and Table 8).

Historically, Literacy was the most popular Essentials Skills course. However, along with the introduction of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) as a pilot programme, in 2006/07, the balance between Literacy and Numeracy began to change in 2007/08. From 2007/08 onwards, Numeracy has accounted for the largest proportion of Essential Skills enrolments. This has been coupled with a steady decline in Literacy, year on year, from 2010/11 until present (Figure 7).

ICT was rolled out as a full programme in August 2009 and has generally accounted for just over a quarter of enrolments in each year since.

Figure 7: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and academic year
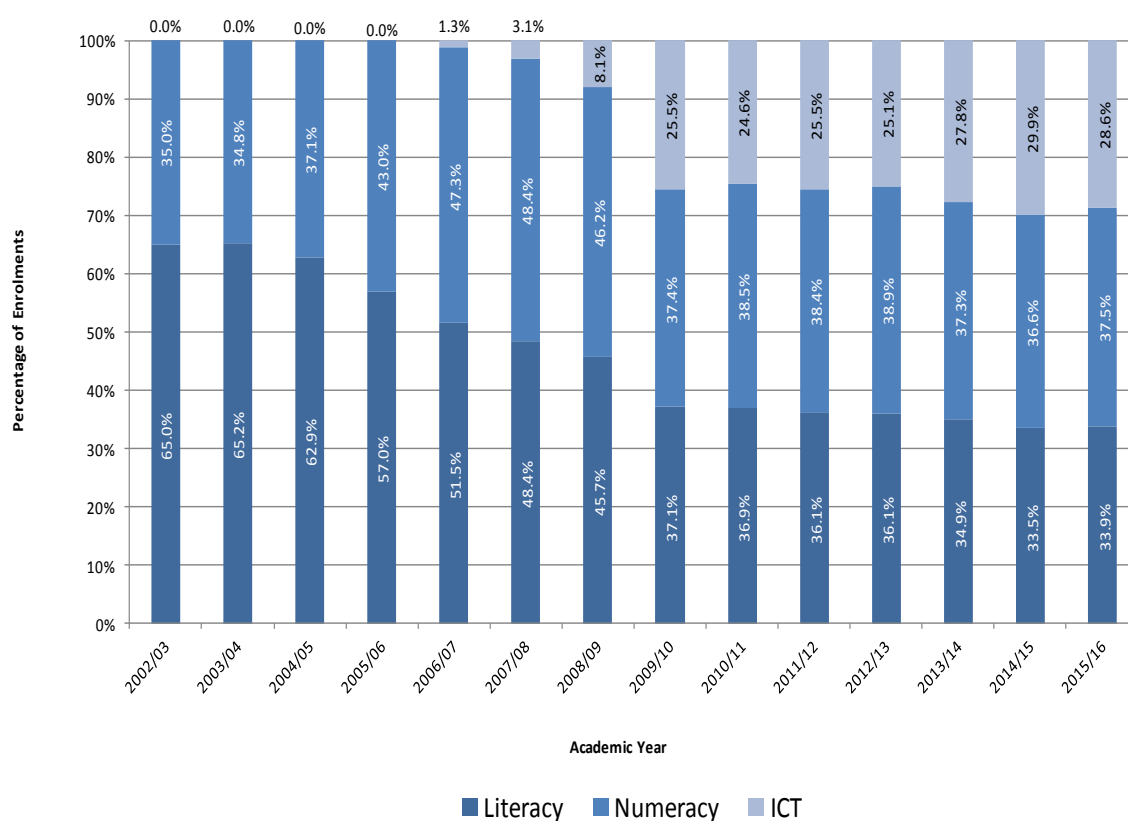
Subject and Age

Over the 14 year period of the strategy, the most popular subject studied has varied across age bands. For those aged '16-25', Numeracy has had the highest proportion of essential skills enrolments (41.0%). For those aged '26-55', the most popular subject studied has been Literacy (44.0%), while the majority (58.6%) of those aged '56+' have studied ICT (Figure 8 and Table 9).

Figure 8: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and age since 2002/03
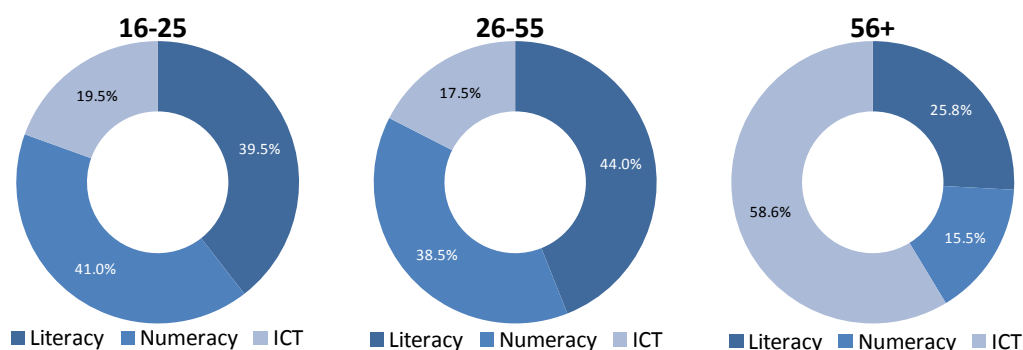
Subject and Gender

As previously detailed, higher proportions of males are enrolled in Essential Skills across all three Essential Skills subjects; ranging from 50.9% in Numeracy to 55.4% in Literacy (Figure 9 and Table 5).

Figure 9: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and gender since 2002/03
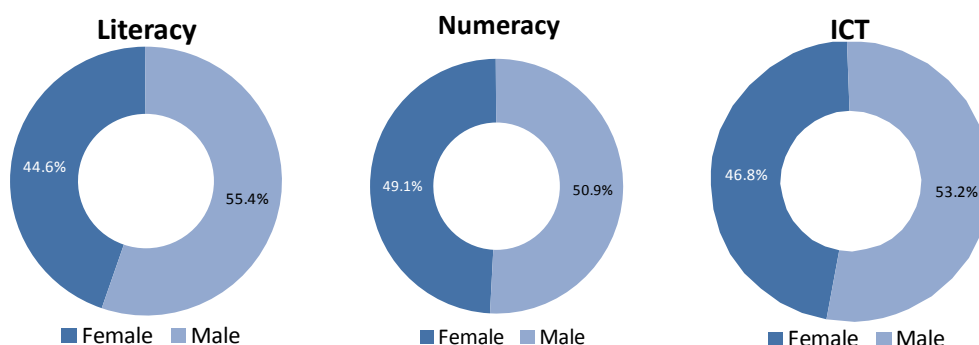
Where are the courses being studied?

The main delivery of Essential Skills courses occurs within FE Colleges, accounting for 66.2% of all enrolments since 2002. Enrolments at FE colleges increased year on year, from 3,700 in 2002/03 to a peak of 39,083 in 2011/12, before decreasing year on year to 24,332 in 2015/16. Enrolments through DfE training programme providers have accounted for 32.0% over the 14 year period, while 1.8% have been with other providers. Please note no enrolments have been undertaken by other providers since 2007/08 (Table 10 and Figure 10).

Figure 10: Essential Skills enrolments by provider since 2002/03
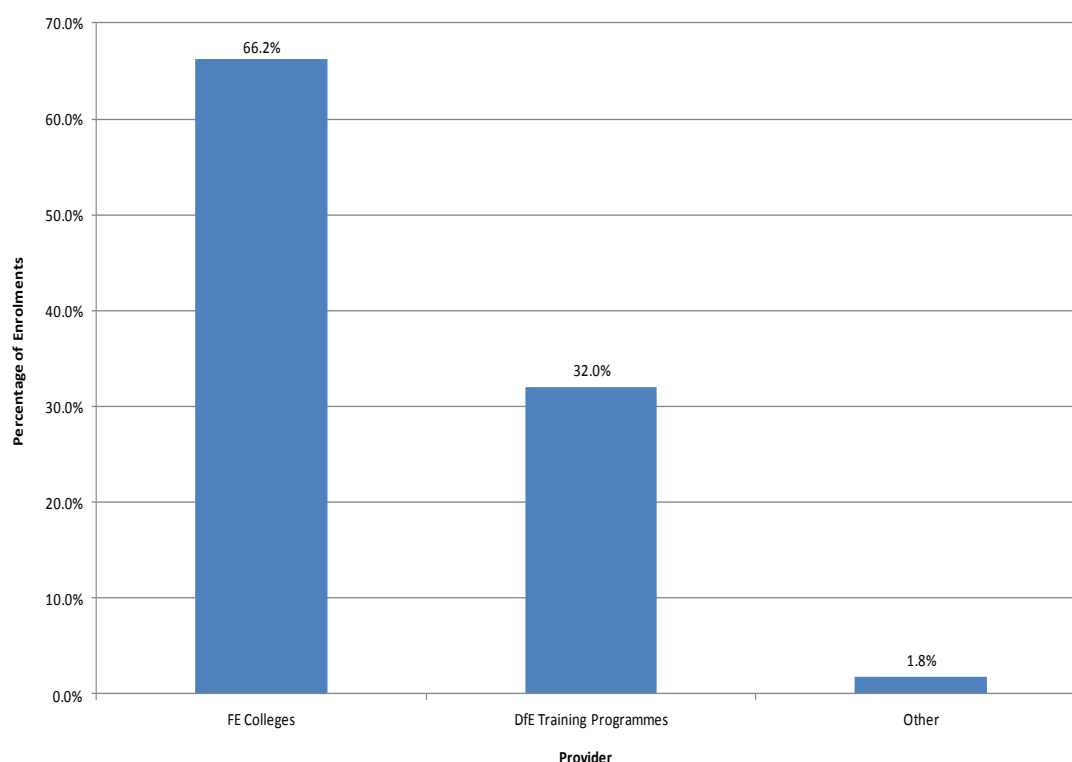
The category 'Other' includes enrolments registered against Proteus, Workers Education Association, EGSA and the Ulster People's College.

In 2015/16, the highest proportion of Essential Skills enrolments was in Belfast Metropolitan College (4,473, 11.7%). The college with the lowest proportion of Essential Skills enrolments was Southern Regional College (3,362, 8.8%). DfE Training Programmes accounted for 13,815 (36.2%) of the enrolments in 2015/16 (Table 10 and Table 11).

Section B: Qualifications issued

The following section focuses solely on Essential Skills qualifications issued by Awarding Organisations from the start of strategy in April 2002.

Number of Qualifications

Information from the awarding organisations indicates that just under 304,500 qualifications have been issued in Essential Skills since the strategy began fourteen years ago.

The number of qualifications issued generally increased each academic year until 2011/12, when it reached 40,094 and then plateaued until 2013/14. However, the number of Essential Skills qualifications has since dropped to 31,453 and 30,261 in 2014/15 and 2015/16 respectively. This decrease is also reflected within the enrolment figures represented previously (Figure 11 and Table 12).

Figure 11: Essential Skills qualifications issued by academic year
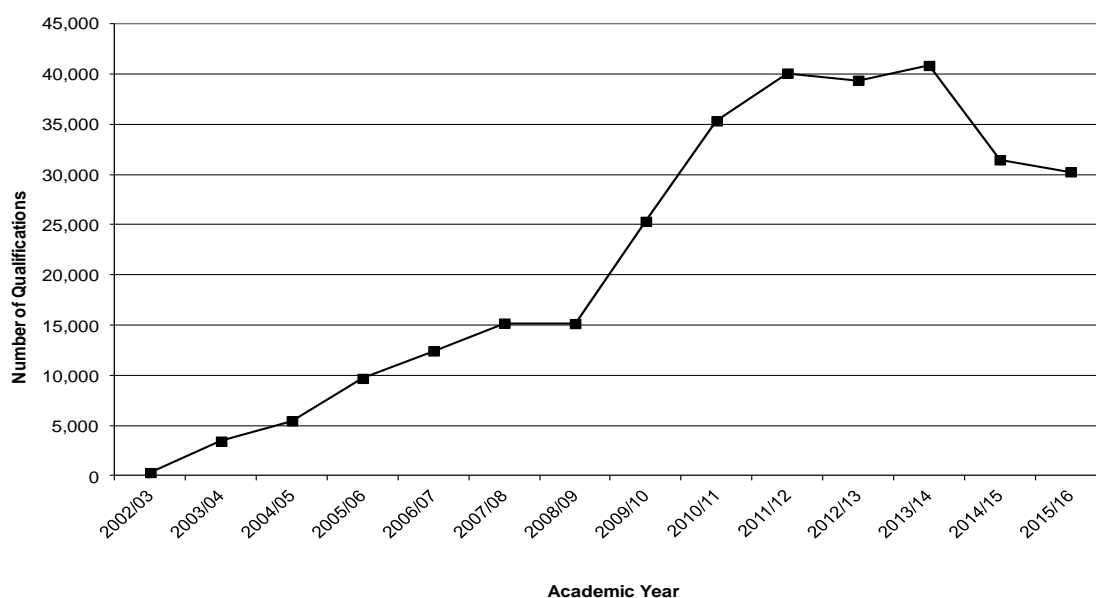
Qualifications by age band

Since the start of the strategy, similar to the pattern of Essential Skills enrolments, the majority of Essential Skills qualifications have been issued to those in the '16-24' age band (68.7%, 209,107). The second highest proportion of Essential Skills qualifications issued to those aged '25-34' (10.3%) (Table 13 and Figure 12).

Figure 12: Essential Skills qualifications issued by age band since 2002/03
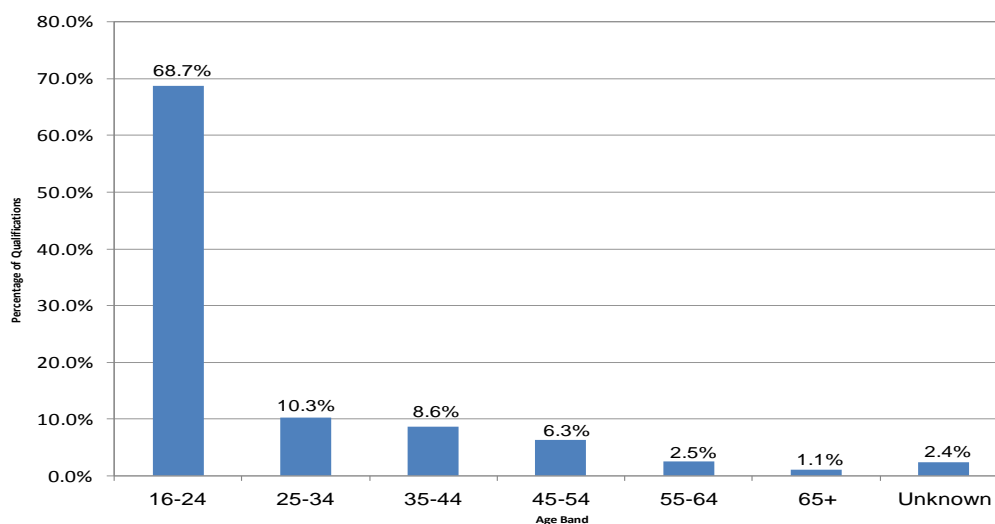
Similar to the enrolment pattern in the most recent academic year (2015/16), the majority (73.9%, 22,368) of Essential Skills qualifications issued to those aged '16-24'. Those aged '25-34' had the second highest proportion (8.4%, 2,529) of Essential Skills (Table 13).

Qualifications by gender

With the exception of 2002/03, in each academic year, males accounted for the majority of those gaining an Essential Skills qualification, ranging from 52.0% in 2012/13 to 60.6% in 2008/09.

In 2015/16, males gained 16,614 (54.9%) Essential Skills, representing a small decrease of 133 from the 2014/15 figure (16,747). Over the same period, qualifications gained by females also decreased (7.1%), from 14,697 in 2014/15 to 13,647 in 2015/16 (Figure 13 and Table 14).

Figure 13: Essential Skills qualifications issued by gender and academic year
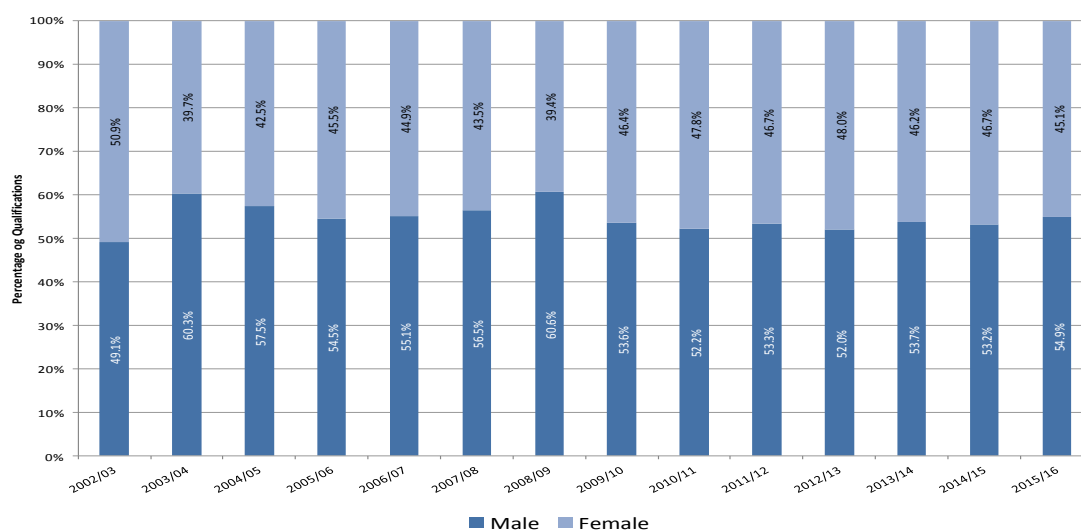
Qualifications by subject

Up to 2009/10 Literacy accounted for the largest proportion of Essential Skills qualifications. However since 2010/11 and with the gradual introduction of ICT the proportions have changed. From 2010/11 Numeracy has had the highest proportion of qualifications, accounting for around two fifths of qualifications in each year, with the exception of 2013/14.

In 2015/16, 'Numeracy' had the highest proportion of qualifications (38.8%). This was followed by 'Literacy' with 35.2% and ICT with 26.0% of Essential Skills qualifications issued (Figure 14 and Table 15).

Figure 14: Essential Skills qualifications issued by subject and academic year
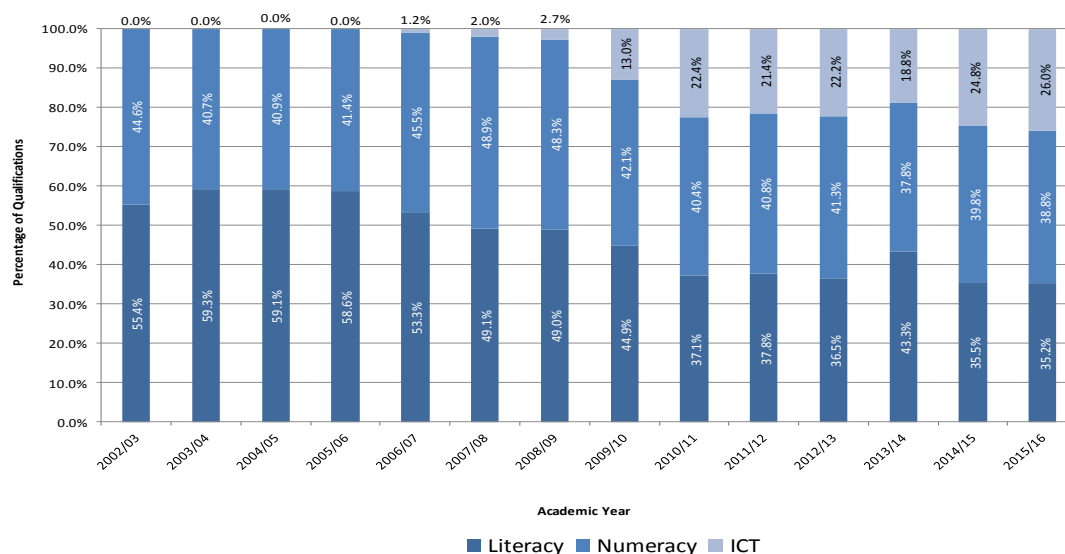
Qualifications by level

Over the 14 year period, although 'Level 1' has seen the highest number of enrolments (212,155), the highest number of qualifications (145,806) issued have been at 'Level 2', accounting for 47.9% of all qualifications.

Since 2004/05, there has been a year on year increase in the number of 'Level 2' qualifications, reaching a peak of 24,923 (61.0%) in 2013/14. In 2014/15 and 2015/16, the number of 'Level 2' qualifications decreased to 18,909 (60.1%) and 18,287 (60.4%) respectively (Figure 15 and Table 16).

Figure 15: Essential Skills qualifications issued by level since 2002/03
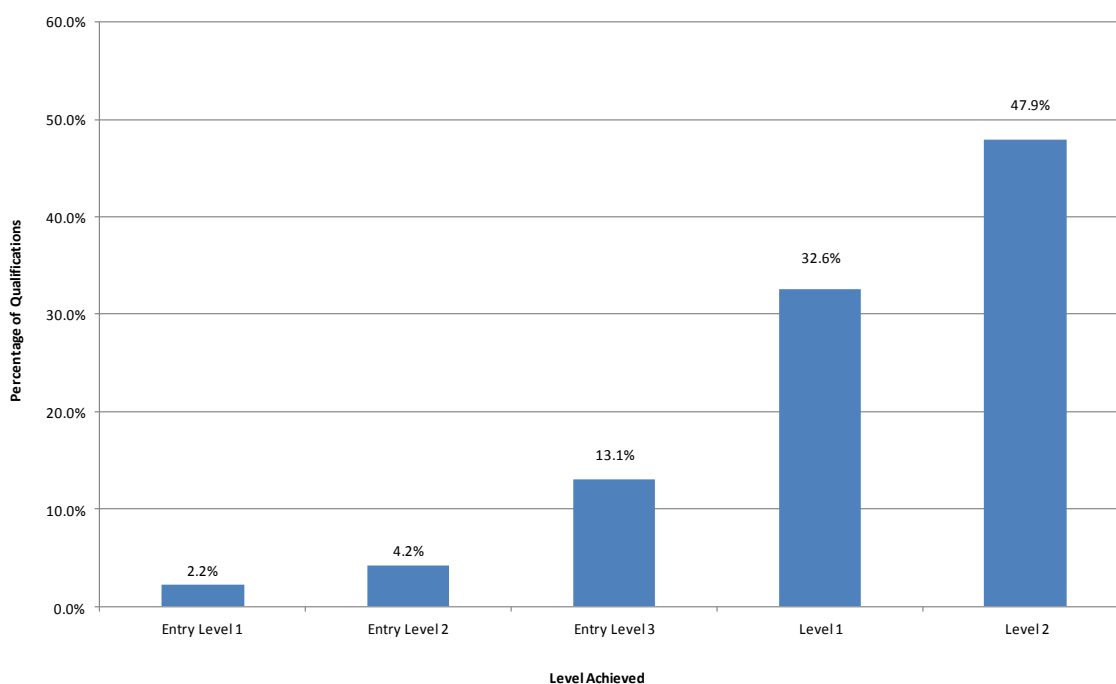
Section C: Performance

Essential Skills courses are typically not longer than a year, so when calculating performance rates, all enrolments are treated as in their final year. All enrolments and qualifications since the start of the strategy are included in the performance rate analysis. Please refer to technical note 11 for further information on why no individual academic year figures are presented within performance analysis.

Performance can be measured across three indicators:

- **Retention rate** is defined as the proportion of the number of enrolments who complete, to the number of enrolments.

- **Achievement rate** relates to the percentage of the number of enrolments who complete their study and achieve their qualification, to the number of enrolments who complete their study.

- **Success rate** is the overall measure of performance, which is the proportion of the number of enrolments who complete their study and achieve their qualification, to the number of enrolments.

Performance of Essential Skills

Over the course of the strategy, the retention rate within Essential Skills courses has been 89.2%. The achievement rate within Essential Skills courses has been 73.4%, while the success rate has been 65.4%. This indicates that over three fifths of those enrolling in Essential Skills courses achieve a qualification (Table A and Table 17).

Performance by subject

The retention rate has ranged from 87.1% in ICT to 90.0% in Numeracy. There has been a larger range in the achievement rate, with the lowest in ICT (64.3%) and the highest in Numeracy (75.8%). The success rates for Literacy (67.5%) and Numeracy (68.2%) have been similar, while ICT has had a lower success rate of 56.0% (Table A and Table 17).

Table A: Essential Skills performance indicators by subject since 2002/03

Subject	Performance Indicator		
	Retention rate	Achievement rate	Success rate
Literacy	89.4%	75.5%	67.5%
Numeracy	90.0%	75.8%	68.2%
ICT	87.1%	64.3%	56.0%
Total	**89.2%**	**73.4%**	**65.4%**

Further details into how retention, achievement and success rates are calculated are available in Definitions.

Performance by gender

While males have a higher retention rate (90.8%) compared to females (87.2%), females have a higher achievement rate (73.6% compared with 73.1%). Males had a higher success rate (66.4%) compared to females (64.2%). This means that males are more likely to stay on the course and to gain a qualification (Table B and Table 18).

Table B: Essential Skills performance indicators by Gender since 2002/03

Gender	Performance Indicator		
	Retention rate	Achievement rate	Success rate
Male	90.8%	73.1%	66.4%
Female	87.2%	73.6%	64.2%
Total	**89.2%**	**73.4%**	**65.4%**

Performance by age band

The retention rate decreases inversely with age of participant, with those aged '16-24' having the highest retention rate (90.5%) and those aged '65+' having the lowest (76.6%). The achievement rate ranges from 69.8% for those aged '16-24' to 82.1% for those aged '55-64'. Similar to the retention and rates, those aged '65+' had the lowest success rate (57.8%). Those aged '45-54' had the highest success rate of 69.9% meaning those enrolments aged '45-54' have the highest proportion of any age band to get a qualification. These variations in retention and achievement rates across the age bands impact on their corresponding success rates. Interestingly, although the 16-25 age band has the highest retention rate, it has the lowest achievement rate, resulting in the second lowest success rate out of the seven age bands (Table C and Table 19).

Table C: Essential Skills performance indicators by age band since 2002/03

Age Band	Performance Indicator		
	Retention rate	Achievement rate	Success rate
16-24	90.5%	69.8%	63.1%
25-34	87.0%	74.2%	64.5%
35-44	86.5%	76.3%	66.1%
45-54	86.5%	80.8%	69.9%
55-64	83.1%	82.1%	68.2%
65+	76.6%	75.5%	57.8%
Total	**89.2%**	**73.4%**	**65.4%**

Performance by target level of study

Across the five levels of the study, the retention rate has ranged from 87.4% in 'Entry Level 1' to 90.5% in 'Level 1' over the 14 years of the strategy. Although those studying at 'Level 1' are more likely to stay on and complete the course, they seem to find it harder to achieve the qualification, given it has the lowest achievement (51.9%) and success rates (46.9%). In contrast, those studying a 'Level 2' course have the highest achievement (98.4%) and success rates (87.7%) across the levels (Table D and Table 20).

Table D: Essential Skills performance indicators by target level of study since 2002/03

Target level	Performance Indicator		
	Retention rate	Achievement rate	Success rate
Entry Level 1	87.4%	81.1%	70.9%
Entry Level 2	89.6%	74.7%	66.9%
Entry Level 3	89.4%	83.3%	74.4%
Level 1	90.5%	51.9%	46.9%
Level 2	89.2%	98.4%	87.7%
Total	**89.2%**	**73.4%**	**65.4%**

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Tables

Table 1: Essential Skills enrolments and individuals by academic year

Academic Year	Number of enrolments	Number of individuals
Up to 31 July 2003	4,009	3,023
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	9,108	5,886
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	13,065	7,921
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	17,260	10,161
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	20,270	10,297
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	25,567	12,087
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	34,987	15,301
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	49,945	20,386
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	60,063	22,914
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	59,326	21,423
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	51,824	18,158
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	45,443	16,225
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	39,218	14,272
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	38,147	13,922
Total	**468,232**	**191,976**

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.
Individuals have been determined using name and date of birth and allocated to a particular academic year based on the start date of their first registration.
Individuals can enrol in more than one course.

Table 2: Essential Skills enrolments by age band and academic year

Academic Year	Age band							Number of enrolments
	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Unknown	
Up to 31 July 2003	1,273	982	826	420	156	291	61	**4,009**
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	4,533	1,717	1,431	764	371	156	136	**9,108**
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	6,117	2,345	2,397	1,311	590	158	147	**13,065**
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	10,798	2,138	2,309	1,275	564	146	30	**17,260**
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	15,564	1,641	1,664	903	372	83	43	**20,270**
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	21,288	1,581	1,469	814	315	66	34	**25,567**
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	25,129	3,703	3,296	2,050	642	158	9	**34,987**
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	34,665	5,022	4,486	3,346	1,450	905	71	**49,945**
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	40,293	7,244	5,480	4,148	1,706	1,134	58	**60,063**
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	40,234	7,011	5,384	4,089	1,500	1,061	47	**59,326**
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	37,860	5,344	3,773	2,984	1,149	641	73	**51,824**
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	35,028	3,941	2,882	2,226	863	479	24	**45,443**
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	30,610	3,260	2,400	1,755	792	375	26	**39,218**
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	29,855	2,999	2,186	1,723	771	289	324	**38,147**
Total	**333,247**	**48,928**	**39,983**	**27,808**	**11,241**	**5,942**	**1,083**	**468,232**

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.
Age is calculated based on date of birth and start date of the enrolment.

Table 3: Essential Skills enrolments by employment status and academic year

Academic Year	Employment Status				Number of enrolments
	Employed	Unemployed	Economically inactive	Unknown	
Up to 31 July 2003	1,349	972	514	1,174	**4,009**
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	2,055	2,281	967	3,805	**9,108**
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	2,934	3,081	1,469	5,581	**13,065**
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	3,978	4,072	3,199	6,011	**17,260**
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	3,418	5,334	3,062	8,456	**20,270**
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	5,999	6,391	5,106	8,071	**25,567**
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	11,424	7,900	9,614	6,049	**34,987**
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	15,537	10,509	17,846	6,053	**49,945**
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	21,304	12,015	20,925	5,819	**60,063**
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	19,742	12,941	22,273	4,370	**59,326**
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	16,414	11,646	19,266	4,498	**51,824**
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	12,406	11,421	18,370	3,246	**45,443**
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	10,925	10,319	16,599	1,375	**39,218**
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	10,380	11,220	13,527	3,020	**38,147**
Total	**137,865**	**110,102**	**152,737**	**67,528**	**468,232**

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.

Table 4: Essential Skills enrolments by gender and academic year

Academic Year	Gender		Number of enrolments
	Male	Female	
Up to 31 July 2003	1,992	2,017	**4,009**
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	4,996	4,112	**9,108**
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	6,495	6,570	**13,065**
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	7,957	9,303	**17,260**
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	10,578	9,692	**20,270**
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	14,580	10,987	**25,567**
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	18,265	16,722	**34,987**
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	26,258	23,687	**49,945**
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	31,845	28,218	**60,063**
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	31,245	28,081	**59,326**
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	28,158	23,666	**51,824**
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	24,555	20,888	**45,443**
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	21,190	18,028	**39,218**
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	20,893	17,254	**38,147**
Total	**249,007**	**219,225**	**468,232**

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.

Table 5: Essential Skills enrolments by gender, subject and academic year

Academic Year	Literacy			Numeracy			ICT		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Up to 31 July 2003	1,282	1,325	**2,607**	710	692	**1,402**	-	-	**-**
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	3,262	2,676	**5,938**	1,734	1,436	**3,170**	-	-	**-**
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	4,060	4,156	**8,216**	2,435	2,414	**4,849**	-	-	**-**
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	4,638	5,196	**9,834**	3,319	4,107	**7,426**	-	-	**-**
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	5,607	4,824	**10,431**	4,812	4,766	**9,578**	159	102	**261**
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	7,307	5,071	**12,378**	6,758	5,626	**12,384**	515	290	**805**
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	8,738	7,260	**15,998**	7,943	8,229	**16,172**	1,584	1,233	**2,817**
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	10,255	8,259	**18,514**	9,433	9,245	**18,678**	6,570	6,183	**12,753**
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	12,343	9,822	**22,165**	11,818	11,327	**23,145**	7,684	7,069	**14,753**
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	11,897	9,546	**21,443**	11,402	11,354	**22,756**	7,946	7,181	**15,127**
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	10,674	8,015	**18,689**	10,411	9,741	**20,152**	7,073	5,910	**12,983**
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	9,134	6,747	**15,881**	8,758	8,190	**16,948**	6,663	5,951	**12,614**
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	7,597	5,528	**13,125**	7,444	6,925	**14,369**	6,149	5,575	**11,724**
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	7,414	5,508	**12,922**	7,430	6,882	**14,312**	6,049	4,864	**10,913**
Total	**104,208**	**83,933**	**188,141**	**94,407**	**90,934**	**185,341**	**50,392**	**44,358**	**94,750**

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.

Table 6: Essential Skills enrolments by target level of study and academic year

Academic Year	Target Level						Number of enrolments
	Entry Level 1	Entry Level 2	Entry Level 3	Level 1	Level 2	Not Known	
Up to 31 July 2003	885	719	1,030	1,062	282	31	**4,009**
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	1,262	1,808	2,943	2,280	759	56	**9,108**
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	1,196	1,792	4,289	3,300	1,724	764	**13,065**
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	829	1,597	4,102	5,725	4,753	254	**17,260**
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	690	1,612	4,585	7,570	5,567	246	**20,270**
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	577	1,728	4,581	10,099	8,195	387	**25,567**
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	499	1,488	4,695	16,466	11,839	-	**34,987**
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	506	1,422	4,262	26,397	16,556	802	**49,945**
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	824	1,470	5,002	30,968	21,032	767	**60,063**
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	594	1,578	4,626	29,052	22,727	749	**59,326**
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	564	1,161	4,064	23,887	21,559	589	**51,824**
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	468	1,170	3,576	20,358	19,093	778	**45,443**
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	412	824	2,999	17,822	16,822	339	**39,218**
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	321	920	3,206	17,169	16,219	312	**38,147**
Total	**9,627**	**19,289**	**53,960**	**212,155**	**167,127**	**6,074**	**468,232**

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.

Table 7: Essential Skills enrolments by deprivation quintiles and academic year

Academic Year	SOA MDM Quintile						Number of enrolments
	Group 1 - Most Deprived	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5 - Least Deprived	Not Known	
Up to 31 July 2003	1,186	803	623	585	301	511	**4,009**
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	2,667	2,003	1,810	1,317	830	481	**9,108**
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	4,190	2,881	2,568	1,728	1,165	533	**13,065**
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	5,233	3,949	3,313	2,540	1,605	620	**17,260**
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	6,907	4,564	3,696	2,867	1,882	354	**20,270**
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	8,273	5,537	5,078	3,908	2,357	414	**25,567**
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	10,785	7,888	6,843	5,420	3,534	517	**34,987**
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	14,604	11,185	9,766	7,986	5,269	1,135	**49,945**
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	17,093	13,840	11,365	10,075	6,177	1,513	**60,063**
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	16,754	13,991	11,798	9,235	6,111	1,437	**59,326**
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	14,842	12,031	10,335	8,361	5,082	1,173	**51,824**
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	13,049	10,570	8,941	7,163	4,366	1,354	**45,443**
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	10,769	8,882	8,060	6,140	4,008	1,359	**39,218**
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	10,361	8,866	7,706	6,313	3,880	1,021	**38,147**
Total	**136,713**	**106,990**	**91,902**	**73,638**	**46,567**	**12,422**	468,232

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.
The group 1 quintile is the most deprived, while the group 5 quintile is the least deprived group of areas across NI.

Table 8: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and academic year

Academic Year	Subject			Number of enrolments
	Literacy	Numeracy	ICT	
Up to 31 July 2003	2,607	1,402	-	**4,009**
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	5,938	3,170	-	**9,108**
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	8,216	4,849	-	**13,065**
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	9,834	7,426	-	**17,260**
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	10,431	9,578	261	**20,270**
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	12,378	12,384	805	**25,567**
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	15,998	16,172	2,817	**34,987**
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	18,514	18,678	12,753	**49,945**
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	22,165	23,145	14,753	**60,063**
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	21,443	22,756	15,127	**59,326**
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	18,689	20,152	12,983	**51,824**
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	15,881	16,948	12,614	**45,443**
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	13,125	14,369	11,724	**39,218**
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	12,922	14,312	10,913	**38,147**
Total	**188,141**	**185,341**	**94,750**	468,232

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.

Table 9: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and age

Subject	Age band				Number of enrolments
	16-25	26-55	56+	Unknown	
Literacy	134,244	49,343	3,982	572	**188,141**
Numeracy	139,304	43,220	2,394	423	**185,341**
ICT	66,060	19,571	9,031	88	**94,750**
Total	**339,608**	**112,134**	**15,407**	**1,083**	**468,232**

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.

Table 10: Essential Skills enrolments by provider and academic year

Academic Year	Provider			Number of enrolments
	FE Colleges	DfE Training Programmes	Other	
Up to 31 July 2003	3,700	53	256	**4,009**
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	6,207	1,784	1,117	**9,108**
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	8,477	2,099	2,489	**13,065**
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	11,853	2,941	2,466	**17,260**
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	13,447	5,655	1,168	**20,270**
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	17,157	7,399	1,011	**25,567**
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	22,192	12,795	-	**34,987**
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	33,793	16,152	-	**49,945**
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	38,236	21,827	-	**60,063**
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	39,083	20,243	-	**59,326**
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	34,019	17,805	-	**51,824**
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	30,601	14,842	-	**45,443**
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	26,891	12,327	-	**39,218**
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	24,332	13,815	-	**38,147**
Total	**309,988**	**149,737**	**8,507**	**468,232**

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.
The category 'Other' includes enrolments registered against Proteus, Workers Education Association, Educational Guidance Service for Adults and the Ulster People's College.

Table 11: Essential Skills enrolments by college and academic year

| Academic Year | College | | | | | | | Number of enrolments |
	Belfast Metropolitan	Northern	North West	South Eastern	Southern	Sout West	Non-Regional College	
Up to 31 July 2003	965	533	985	195	529	493	309	**4,009**
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	1,382	1,237	991	747	998	852	2,901	**9,108**
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	1,875	1,789	1,094	1,070	1,408	1,241	4,588	**13,065**
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	2,049	2,257	1,547	2,270	2,392	1,338	5,407	**17,260**
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	2,525	2,245	1,741	2,924	2,302	1,710	6,823	**20,270**
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	3,208	3,028	2,696	3,197	2,786	2,242	8,410	**25,567**
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	4,142	3,811	3,536	4,225	3,511	2,967	12,795	**34,987**
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	5,241	5,337	4,874	6,794	7,046	4,501	16,152	**49,945**
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	5,419	5,257	4,914	7,914	9,001	5,731	21,827	**60,063**
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	5,732	5,128	5,172	7,253	9,289	6,509	20,243	**59,326**
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	5,139	4,717	4,316	6,799	7,039	6,009	17,805	**51,824**
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	5,320	4,088	4,294	5,627	5,510	5,762	14,842	**45,443**
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	4,702	4,699	4,222	3,890	4,353	5,025	12,327	**39,218**
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	4,473	3,552	4,172	4,330	3,362	4,443	13,815	**38,147**
Total	**52,172**	**47,678**	**44,554**	**57,235**	**59,526**	**48,823**	**158,244**	**468,232**

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.
Non-regional college includes enrolment registered against DfE training providers Proteus, Workers Education Association, Educational Guidance Service for Adults and the Ulster People's College.

Table 12: Essential Skills qualifications issued by academic year

Academic Year	Number of qualifications
Up to 31 July 2003	316
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	3,443
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	5,465
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	9,691
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	12,427
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	15,197
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	15,153
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	25,333
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	35,337
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	40,094
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	39,381
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	40,851
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	31,453
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	30,261
Total	**304,402**

Source: Awarding Organisations.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2016.

Table 13: Essential Skills qualifications issued by age band and academic year

Academic Year	Age Band							Number of Qualifications
	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Unknown	
Up to 31 July 2003	140	72	56	38	6	2	2	316
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	1,737	718	513	258	119	32	66	3,443
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	3,115	715	733	429	212	78	183	5,465
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	5,708	1,251	1,415	798	356	83	80	9,691
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	8,824	1,243	1,246	692	259	75	88	12,427
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	11,406	1,250	1,251	708	292	76	214	15,197
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	11,827	1,095	913	592	200	34	492	15,153
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	17,294	2,457	2,283	1,700	697	353	549	25,333
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	23,528	3,467	3,215	2,729	1,125	692	581	35,337
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	26,088	4,485	3,732	2,983	1,128	614	1,064	40,094
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	26,148	4,408	3,412	2,864	1,019	527	1,003	39,381
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	28,296	4,618	3,281	2,492	840	344	980	40,851
1 August 2014- 31 July 2015	22,628	3,096	2,310	1,586	716	246	871	31,453
1 August 2015- 31 July 2016	22,368	2,529	1,891	1,452	613	245	1,163	30,261
Total	**209,107**	**31,404**	**26,251**	**19,321**	**7,582**	**3,401**	**7,336**	**304,402**

Source: Awarding Organisations.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2016.

Table 14: Essential Skills qualifications issued by gender and academic year

Academic Year	Gender			Number of Qualifications
	Male	Female	Unknown	
Up to 31 July 2003	155	161	-	316
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	2,077	1,366	-	3,443
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	3,140	2,325	-	5,465
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	5,284	4,407	-	9,691
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	6,850	5,577	-	12,427
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	8,582	6,615	-	15,197
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	9,187	5,966	-	15,153
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	13,570	11,763	-	25,333
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	18,430	16,907	-	35,337
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	21,364	18,720	10	40,094
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	20,484	18,887	10	39,381
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	21,956	18,884	11	40,851
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	16,747	14,697	9	31,453
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	16,614	13,647	-	30,261
Total	**164,440**	**139,922**	**40**	**304,402**

Source: Awarding Organisations.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2016.

Table 15: Essential Skills qualifications issued by subject and academic year

Academic Year	Subject			Number of qualifications
	Literacy	Numeracy	ICT	
Up to 31 July 2003	175	141	-	**316**
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	2,040	1,403	-	**3,443**
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	3,231	2,234	-	**5,465**
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	5,680	4,011	-	**9,691**
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	6,626	5,656	145	**12,427**
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	7,464	7,428	305	**15,197**
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	7,429	7,319	405	**15,153**
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	11,376	10,661	3,296	**25,333**
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	13,125	14,293	7,919	**35,337**
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	15,143	16,357	8,594	**40,094**
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	14,375	16,267	8,739	**39,381**
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	17,694	15,461	7,696	**40,851**
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	11,155	12,511	7,787	**31,453**
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	10,647	11,749	7,865	**30,261**
Total	**126,160**	**125,491**	**52,751**	**304,402**

Source: Awarding Organisations.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2016.

Table 16: Essential Skills qualifications issued by level achieved and academic year

Academic Year	Level Achieved					Number of qualifications
	Entry Level 1	Entry Level 2	Entry Level 3	Level 1	Level 2	
Up to 31 July 2003	-	-	-	238	78	**316**
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	380	455	833	1,484	291	**3,443**
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	740	987	2,850	689	199	**5,465**
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	773	1,336	3,623	2,633	1,326	**9,691**
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	655	1,164	3,433	4,231	2,944	**12,427**
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	598	1,244	3,658	5,012	4,685	**15,197**
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	306	928	3,116	5,374	5,429	**15,153**
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	394	906	3,138	10,534	10,361	**25,333**
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	472	1,025	3,444	14,089	16,307	**35,337**
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	517	1,088	3,634	14,273	20,582	**40,094**
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	579	1,103	3,353	12,861	21,485	**39,381**
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	460	1,016	3,922	10,530	24,923	**40,851**
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	487	822	2,495	8,740	18,909	**31,453**
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	426	755	2,389	8,404	18,287	**30,261**
Total	**6,787**	**12,829**	**39,888**	**99,092**	**145,806**	**304,402**

Source: Awarding Organisations.
Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2016.

Table 17: Essential Skills performance analysis by subject since 2002/03

Subject	Enrolments (Enrolments Dataset)	Completers (Enrolments Dataset)	Retention Rate	Qualifications (awarding organisation dataset)	Achievement Rate	Success Rate
Literacy	186,995	167,142	89.4%	126,160	75.5%	67.5%
Numeracy	184,120	165,630	90.0%	125,491	75.8%	68.2%
ICT	94,148	82,026	87.1%	52,751	64.3%	56.0%
All Subjects	**465,263**	**414,798**	**89.2%**	**304,402**	**73.4%**	**65.4%**

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16; Awarding Organisations.
Notes: Enrolments figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.
Qualifications figures are correct as at 30th September 2016.
Further details into how retention, achievement and success rates are calculated are available in Annex 2.

Table 18: Essential Skills performance analysis by gender since 2002/03

Gender	Enrolments (enrolments dataset)	Completers (enrolments dataset)	Retention rate	Qualifications (awarding organisation dataset)	Achievement rate	Success rate
Male	247,479	224,803	90.8%	164,440	73.1%	66.4%
Female	217,784	189,995	87.2%	139,922	73.6%	64.2%
Unknown	-	-	N/A	40	N/A	N/A
Total	**465,263**	**414,798**	**89.2%**	**304,402**	**73.4%**	**65.4%**

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16; Awarding Organisations.
Notes: Enrolments figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.
Qualifications figures are correct as at 30th September 2016.
Further details into how retention, achievement and success rates are calculated are available in Annex 2.

Table 19: Essential Skills performance analysis by age band since 2002/03

Age Band	Enrolments (enrolments dataset)	Completers (enrolments dataset)	Retention rate	Qualifications (awarding organisation dataset)	Achievement rate	Success rate
16-24	331,133	299,518	90.5%	209,107	69.8%	63.1%
25-34	48,676	42,331	87.0%	31,404	74.2%	64.5%
35-44	39,736	34,390	86.5%	26,251	76.3%	66.1%
45-54	27,639	23,908	86.5%	19,321	80.8%	69.9%
55-64	11,114	9,235	83.1%	7,582	82.1%	68.2%
65+	5,883	4,505	76.6%	3,401	75.5%	57.8%
Unknown	1,082	911	N/A	7,336	N/A	N/A
Total	**465,263**	**414,798**	**89.2%**	**304,402**	**73.4%**	**65.4%**

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16; Awarding Organisations.
Notes: Enrolments figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.
Qualifications figures are correct as at 30th September 2016.
Further details into how retention, achievement and success rates are calculated are available in Annex 2.

Table 20: Essential Skills performance analysis by target level since 2002/03

Target level	Enrolments (enrolments dataset)	Completers (enrolments dataset)	Retention rate	Qualifications (awarding organisation dataset)	Achievement rate	Success rate
Entry Level 1	9,576	8,373	87.4%	6,787	81.1%	70.9%
Entry Level 2	19,181	17,178	89.6%	12,829	74.7%	66.9%
Entry Level 3	53,585	47,886	89.4%	39,888	83.3%	74.4%
Level 1	211,155	191,040	90.5%	99,092	51.9%	46.9%
Level 2	166,248	148,237	89.2%	145,806	98.4%	87.7%
Not Known	5,518	2,084	N/A	0	N/A	N/A
Total	**465,263**	**414,798**	**89.2%**	**304,402**	**73.4%**	**65.4%**

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16; Awarding Organisations.
Notes: Enrolments figures are correct as at 14th October 2016.
Qualifications figures are correct as at 30th September 2016.
Further details into how retention, achievement and success rates are calculated are available in Annex 2.

Annex 2: Definitions

Academic year

An academic year is defined as 1st August 20XX to 31st July 20XX+1.

Achieved level

This is the level which the awarding organisation has indicated the individual has achieved at within the Essential Skills framework.

Achievement rate

Achievement rate relates to the percentage of the number of enrolments who complete their study and achieve their qualification to the number of enrolments who complete their study.

Achievement rate =   Number of achievements
                          Number of non-withdrawals plus Number of
                          withdrawals who achieve (both full and partial)

Age

For enrolments, age is calculated at 1st July of the previous academic year, based on the start date of the course. For qualifications, age is calculated at the certification date.

Deprivation

The analysis presented in the publication utilises 5 groups or quintiles of Super Output Areas (SOAs) across Northern Ireland. These quintiles are determined based on level of deprivation using the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM).

SOA's ranked 1 to 178 from the most deprived quintile of SOAs relative to all other SOAs. Those ranked 713 to 890 from the least deprived quintile.

SOA is determined using the postcode provided on the enrolment record.

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2010 is a weighted combination of the seven domains of deprivation. The Income and Employment Deprivation domains account for 50% of the multiple deprivation measure. The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain, and Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain account for a further 30% and the remainder is made up of the Proximity to Services, Living Environment and Crime and Disorder Domains.

For further details on deprivation measurement in Northern Ireland please follow this link:
http://www.nisra.gov.uk/deprivation/nimdm_2010.htm

NISRA aims to publish an updated NIMDM in mid 2017
http://www.nisra.gov.uk/deprivation/nimdm_2017.htm.

Enrolments

The enrolment returns are merged and any duplicate enrolments are dealt with through a process, presented in the guidance 'Defining an Essential Skills enrolment'. The resultant file is then analysed to present the total number of Essential Skills enrolments.

Individual

The number of individuals for each academic year has been determined (using Forename, Surname and Date of Birth) within the specific academic year period. As an individual may be enrolled in more than one Essential Skills course the total number of individuals calculated over the entire time period does not equal the number of enrolments.

Qualifications

Total qualifications are taken to be the sum of all records within the Essential Skills Qualifications Return.

Regulated

From academic year 2013/14, only those courses that appear on the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RRQ) or the Department's Prescribed List of Approved Non NQF/QCF Qualification (PLAQ) list (for level 3 and below) or are Higher Education (HE) in FE courses (level 4 and above), will be deemed as 'regulated' by the Department. Any course that falls outside this definition is not considered as 'regulated' regardless of whether it is considered to produce 'outcomes' e.g. internal college certification.

In publications for academic year 2013/14 onwards, the term 'Regulated' is used in regard to this type of provision within FE. This cohort of FE provision is comparable with the previous figures for Professional and Technical contained in FE enrolment publications between 2003/04 and 2012/13.

Individual students can be enrolled in multiple courses and, therefore, can have enrolments in regulated and non-regulated courses within the one academic year.

Retention rate

Retention rate is defined as the proportion of the number of enrolments who complete their study to the number of enrolments.

Number of non-withdrawals – includes any enrolments that have not been classified as a withdrawal, namely Course Status options 'Continuing', 'Completed' or the status is 'unknown'.

Retention rate =   Number of non-withdrawals plus Number of withdrawals who achieve (both full and partial)
Number of Enrolments

Success rate

Success rate is the overall measure of performance, which is the proportion of the number of enrolments who complete their study and achieve their qualification to the number of enrolments.

Success rate =   Number of achievements
                  Number of Enrolments

                         OR

                  Retention rate x Achievement rate

Target Level

When an individual enrols on an Essential Skills course they are assessed over a 6-8 week period to establish what level they are currently functioning at. They are then normally targeted at a level higher than their assessed level. 'Literacy and 'Numeracy' courses are available for all five levels, whereas ICT is only available for 'Level 1' and 'Level 2'. The ability typically demonstrated at each level is detailed below:

- **Entry Level 1** is the national school curriculum equivalent for attainment at age 5-7. Adults below Entry Level 1 may not be able to write short messages to family or select floor numbers in lifts. Adults with ICT Entry Level 1 skills are able to find and select information from an ICT-based source and follow recommended safe practices.

- **Entry Level 2** is the national school curriculum equivalent for attainment at age 7-9. Adults with below Entry Level 2 may not be able to describe a child's symptoms to a doctor or use a cash point to withdraw cash. Adults with ICT Entry Level 2 skills are able to use ICT to communicate, as well as enter and edit small amounts of information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience.

- **Entry Level 3** is the national school curriculum equivalent for attainment at age 9-11. Adults with skills below Entry Level 3 may not be able to understand price labels on pre-packaged food or pay household bills. Adults with ICT Entry Level 3 skills are able to interact with and use an ICT system to meet needs, as well as present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience.

- **Level 1** is equivalent to GCSE grades D-G. Adults with skills below Level 1 may not be able to read bus or train timetables or check the pay and deductions on a wage slip. Adults with ICT Level 1 skills are able to select and use a variety of appropriate sources of information, as well as enter, organise, develop format and bring together information to suit content and purpose.

- **Level 2** is equivalent to GCSE grades A*-C. Adults with skills below Level 2 may not be able to compare products and services for the best buy, or work out a household budget. Adults with ICT Level 2 skills are able to use a variety of appropriate sources of information and evaluate its fitness for purpose, as well as evaluate and use different methods of organising and presenting information, taking into account fitness for purpose and audience.

Annex 3: Technical Notes

1. Enrolment information for FE colleges is sourced from the Essential Skills enrolment return for the academic years 2002/03 to 2012/13 and from the Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2015/16. For DfE's training and employment programmes, the source is the Essential Skills extract from the Client Management System (CMS).

2. Both Essential Skills enrolment returns list the enrolment records, which are assigned to a particular provider and returned to the Department. Both returns are merged and any duplicate enrolments are dealt with through a process, presented in the guidance 'Defining an Essential Skills enrolment'. The resultant file is then analysed to present the total number of Essential Skills enrolments.

3. FE colleges have indicated that some 2002/03 Essential Skills enrolments were collated on a paper basis and registered with Awarding Organisations without being recorded on a computerised enrolment management system. Consequently, these enrolments are not available and are not included in this analysis.

4. The enrolment information is correct as at 14th October 2016. However, as some erroneous records are excluded from the Essential Skills enrolment database, figures are provisional and are subject to change.

5. The source of the qualification information is the quarterly data provided by the awarding organisations.

6. Qualification figures are correct as at 30th September 2016. However, figures may be subject to change due to any amendments in the qualification data supplied later by the awarding organisations.

7. Any enrolment records that have been recorded as transfers should have an accompanying second enrolment record (the one they have transferred onto). Through the guidance of the 'Defining an Essential Skills enrolment', if applicable these will be accounted for and only one record will remain for analysis.

8. In terms of outcome, the original enrolment recorded as a transfer will not have any outcome recorded against it and therefore the transferred enrolment cannot be measured in terms of performance. Consequently, any enrolments recorded as transfers are excluded from performance analysis and are not included in final year enrolment counts.

9. Performance analysis is determined over the life of strategy from 2002/03 to 2015/16. No individual academic year's retention, achievement or success rates are calculated as two separate datasets are utilised to produce the performance rates. One dataset is used to determine enrolments and one for qualifications. An individual can enrol in one academic year but the qualification may not be issued until

the next academic year. Consequently, individual year performance analysis may be skewed due to this scenario and therefore is not calculated within this publication.

Further Enquiries

Further details about any of the statistics in this statistical bulletin can be obtained from:

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